result any perceived inefficiency in the existing postal sector and it provides for registration of private couriers only. The Bill has since been referred to the Standing Committee of Parliament Information Technology.

(e) The Department of Posts is not aware of any such problem.

(f) Opening and upgradation of post offices in Kerala Circle is subject to fulfilment prescribed norms and availability of resources.

Withdrawal of STD facility

†2235. PROF. RAM DEO BHANDARY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether STD facility was given to the Members of the Telephone Advisory Committee;

(b) whether this facility has not been withdrawn;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) by when the said facility would be restored after reconsideration by Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN): (a) to (d) No, Sir. STD is not provided on Telephone Advisory Committee (TAC) telephones. However, in some individual cases STD facility was provided on specific request. The matter has already been examined and it has been decided not to provide this facility on TAC telephones.

Merger of MTNL and BSNL

2236. SHRI P.K. MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 916 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 28th November, 2002 and state:

(a) whether the process of identifying the consultant who can advise DoT on the modalities of the merger has already been started

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.